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Barkham Newsletter

Issue 138 Winter 2021

from the Barkham Village Residents Association

<http://www.barkham.org.uk>

Twitter: @BarkhamVRA Facebook: <http://gid.uk/BVRAF>



CAROLS in the PARK

Friday 17th December 2021

7pm at The Junipers Elizabeth Park

Everyone Welcome

Finishing with mulled wine or lemonade and mince pies

Closing voluntary collection for band



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Chairman's Chat

We are really positive that we have now started the social events again and whilst we are placing additional restrictions on the numbers, we are seeing really good participation. Please see the social section and the calendar for upcoming events. Importantly the traditional and ever popular Carols in the Park will take place shortly after you receive this newsletter.

We recently completed the Residents Association Annual General Meeting and I was pleased to see a number of residents attending. During the course of 2021 we have continued to publish and distribute four editions of the newsletter despite the restrictions that we have all endured. Many thanks to Suzanne, our editor, Bev our membership secretary and all of the volunteer distributors for making this happen.

Barkham continues to see challenges in terms of road closures, roadworks and the overall impact of planning decisions. This is a serious issue for many of our residents and something that the Residents Association believes needs to be addressed with the local authorities. One such example is the huge increase in heavy traffic in School Road and Langley Common Road. This is

being caused by the Instalcom operation in Wood Lane which appears to have become a major depot rather than the store that was originally submitted. If you are being affected by this, please make your views known.

On a final note, after just over two years as Chairman I have decided to step down as soon as a replacement can be found. I have enjoyed the interaction with the committee and the residents but much of my time over the next few years will hopefully be out of the country. I therefore don't believe that I will be able to give the BVRA the necessary attention and feel that it would be best taken over by someone who can. If you would be interested in volunteering for this role, please have a look at the advert below.

chairman@barkham.org.uk

BVRA 2021/22 GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Chairman: Alan Dixon 977 1831
chairman@barkham.org.uk
- Secretary: vacancy 977 1831
secretary@barkham.org.uk
- Treasurer: Alison Goudge 989 2287
treasurer@barkham.org.uk
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Editorial

Is it really December? Where has the year gone? I hope you have all managed to stay well and have been able to resume some sort of normal social gatherings, do review the diary as the social and group calendar meetings are picking up. We also have an update to the local planning strategy which I am sure will be long debated.

If you have a little spare time and are looking to give back to the community there are a number of opportunities to volunteer, take a

look at Link Visiting, Crossroads charity, Barkham Village Hall charity, and of course, the BVRA Chairman and Social committee. It is the time of year to Pay Forward.

I am really pleased to announce the return of the festive hamper full of delicious treats. This was very popular with our residents last year and we will be putting together a collection of luxury goodies which will be sourced from local distributors.

To enter, visit our website (barkham.org.uk/christmas) and answer a simple question (have your BVRA newsletter to hand). We will be drawing the winner over the weekend of 18/19th of December and we will deliver to a local address the week before Christmas. Eligibility is restricted to recipients of the winter 2021 newsletter and multiple entries from the same address will not be entered into the competition.

To ensure we spread some festive cheer throughout the community we will also give a donation of the same value to the Wokingham Foodbank.

Merry Christmas to one and all!



Win a Hamper

Advertising and Newsletter Contributions

Newsletter articles / contributions for the Spring edition should be in by 11 February 2022. It helps if these can be submitted in electronic form by email to newsletter@barkham.org.uk.

For trade adverts, please email treasurer@barkham.org.uk, or call 977 1831. We offer three landscape sizes, 64mm x 54mm at £22, 124mm x 105mm at £52 and 190x130mm at £100, for 4 quarterly insertions.

Distribution of the next issue will take place in early March.

Keen to meet people and get involved in the local community? Interested in a volunteering opportunity (approx. 8 hours per month).

BVRA Chairperson Needed

With the planned departure of the current Chairman the BVRA is looking for a replacement volunteer Chairperson. This is an engaging role within the local community and would suit an individual who is comfortable with chairing meetings and being part of an enthusiastic team who represent the Residents Association in activities and events.

The scope of the role is:-

- * Chair BVRA quarterly committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting.
- * In conjunction with Committee determine BVRA strategy and direction.
- * Guide and support individual Committee Members in the planning and execution of their individual duties.
- * Appoint new committee members when replacements are required.
- * Interface with other local organisations e.g. Barkham Parish Council to ensure co-ordination of actions.
- * Ensure that the BVRA is compliant with all working practices e.g. GDPR.
- * Act as a point of contact for residents issues and concerns.

If you are interested in this role please contact Alan Dixon for further information. Email: chairman@barkham.org.uk



Local Plan Update Consultation

Local Plans are key documents which set out the strategy and associated policies for managing development, they set out where development should go and the improvements to infrastructure that are required alongside, ensuring residents have access to facilities such as schools and green spaces. Not having a current local plan means that developers can successfully apply for planning permission. This speculative development occurs with little infrastructure and leads to greater housing numbers on unsuitable and inappropriate sites.

The councils current Local Plan, the Core Strategy, was designed to manage development to 2026. It has worked well in most cases, with most of the development occurring in places where planned and being supported by millions

of pounds of investment in infrastructure including new schools, roads, and green spaces, more importantly it has allowed the council to refuse and win at appeals against developers proposing unsuitable sites.

Refreshing our Local Plan will mean the borough's planning policies continue to be effective and will be difficult for developers to challenge with inappropriate alternative sites. Without a new plan, there will be less control over where development happens, and it will be much harder to try and improve infrastructure required.

A local plan must be realistic and enable land to come forward to meet development needs unless there are compelling reasons why this cannot be achieved. There are

councils who have refused the Local Plan process and have had one imposed by the Ministry of Housing and this can in extreme cases of non-cooperation result in the loss of the local authority right to determine planning applications.

The government introduced a standard method which calculates the housing need for each local authority. For Wokingham Borough the housing need currently calculates at 768 new homes each year. The council engaged a leading planning barrister and statistician to help understand whether we could progress a case for exceptional circumstances. The outcome was that there are no compelling reasons under the current government framework to do so.

Whilst the housing need is challenging, the government had proposed a revision to their standard method that would have more than doubled our annual requirement to over 1,600 dwellings a year. We campaigned hard and submit robust technical challenges against the proposal which was subsequently abandoned by the government.

To be clear, if we progress a local plan which does not enable the amount of housing expected by the government, it will not pass examination in public, bringing all the negatives of loss of control.

We consulted on a Draft Local Plan in 2020. A central plank of the plan was the creation of a garden town at Grazeley. After agreeing the plan for consultation, a change in legislation resulted in the unexpected extension of the area where emergency plans must be in place around AWE Burghfield to incorporate for the first time

both the area of Grazeley as well as the villages of Three Mile Cross and Spencers Wood. The change means that the Grazeley garden town proposal, and therefore the strategy proposed by the plan, is no longer achievable, this very much came as a surprise as the money for the exploratory work came from a government grant. We have therefore been forced to go back and consider alternative approaches.

Central to the councils thinking has been the consideration of residents. Residents have told us through earlier consultations their preference is for the need for new housing to be met through large scale developments, where infrastructure can be provided alongside. They also wish to see use made of previously developed land know as brown field sites. Large scale developments are often also the best technical solution for providing new housing in ways which respond to ever increasing response to the challenge of climate change.

They offer the opportunity to design in sustainability from the outset, including measures to lessen the need to travel by private car, so reducing our carbon footprint and impact on the environment and air quality compared to dispersed development. Large developments also allow to plan for accessible green spaces, drainage management, biodiversity enhancements and renewable energy.

The recommended alternative strategy includes available, suitable sites in our town centres for development and makes an allowance for development we can reasonably expect to come forward in our towns and villages. There is however insuffi-

cient previously developed land available to meet the housing the government expects us to enable. It is not true to suggest there is – that solution simply doesn't exist and progressing a plan on such a hope would fail at examination.

The strategy therefore recommends the allocation of a large new development on land between Shinfield, Arborfield and Sindlesham – referred to as Hall Farm / Loddon Valley. This is the most deliverable and sustainable large development option. Others were considered but our judgement is that this is the best opportunity. It offers the opportunity to provide homes alongside jobs with the area in proximity to the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park, Shinfield, a key location for economic and jobs growth the M4 and with good transport links buses and rail.

The Hall Farm / Loddon Valley opportunity also allows the creation of a large publicly accessible green space or park along the River Loddon Valley, an area currently without public access. The river corridor provides a significant opportunity for comprehensive habitat management, restoration, and enhancement, improving biodiversity. The new community would be supported by a comprehensive package of infrastructure to incentivise sustainable behaviours and travel choices. This would include a framework to maximise opportunities for walking and cycling both within the new community and between the surrounding places (including a new connection over the M4 to Earley), primary schools and a secondary school, and neighbourhood centres. *cont'd...*

It's that time again, the borough council is required by central government to produce an updated local plan which will supersede the previous one, this new one runs through to 2038 but will require updates along the way to ensure it remains current and delivers the housing numbers as dictated to the council using the government formula.

The BVRA Needs Your Support

Please help us by paying your £2 subscription by direct debit. If you haven't paid this year, your debit will be taken shortly after you sign up. If you have paid, you will not be charged twice and your debit will be used to take next year's subscription in February 2022.

To create a debit please go to:
<https://www.barkham.org.uk/bvra/bvra-membership>
where full details are available.

All debits are fully protected under the UK direct debit scheme. By setting a debit up you will be helping to ensure the future of the BVRA and also making it easier for our distributors.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Set up a Direct Debit with Barkham Village Residents Association". It includes fields for "First name", "Last name", "Your sort code", "Your account number", "Post code", and "Email". There are also links for "Click here to use a company name" and "Click here to enter IBAN". A checkbox option is present: "More than one person is required to authorise Direct Debits". A green button at the bottom says "Set up Direct Debit". At the bottom of the form, there is a "GOCARDLESS" logo and text: "webmaster@barkham.org.uk", "By confirming you are agreeing to our Website Terms of Use. GoCardless uses personal data as described in our Privacy Notice. We use analytics cookies.", and "Your payments are protected by the Direct Debit Guarantee".

...cont'd Whilst this provides for most new homes within the plan period, and beyond, there is a need for development elsewhere across the borough to meet the government's housing expectations. This needs to be proportional and targeted to suitable locations. The new strategy identifies opportunities which are now available within and around our existing major developments, as well as a range of sites on the edge of other towns and villages.

Local Green Space is an options designation that allows communities to identify and protect green areas that are of particular importance to them. The use of Local Green Space will not be suitable in all instances. Guidance is set out in national planning policy. The Draft Local Plan included proposals for 8 Local Green Spaces across the borough with only a surprisingly small number of areas being nominated by communities. As communities may not have recognised this opportunity, the council wrote to all parish and town councils, and amenity groups across the borough inviting them to nominate further areas and to explain why they felt the areas were important. I am glad to say the response was over 100 new areas were nominated. Officers have reviewed each site against national planning policy and recommend proposing allocations for 71 out of the 100 nominated new Local Green Spaces.

Remember this a consultation and runs from the 22nd of November until 17th January 2022 and can be found on the council website and as such no decisions will be made until all comments from Residents, Developers and other interested parties have been assessed and considered.

Covid update

The rate of new Covid cases within the Borough has been decreasing across half term but still remains high at 390 per 100,000. The rate within the Borough remains slightly above, but in line with, the rates across the South-East (379 per 100,000). Most cases continue to occur within our school age population and their parents, in line with the rest of the country.

The council will work closely with Head Teachers and school communities through the Children's Services Taskforce across the term to make schools as safe as possible.

Officers across the Council are working to maximise the effectiveness of the Government's Plan A for our residents; ensuring people are getting tested when it is right for them to do so (rapid lateral flow testing routinely where someone has no symptoms, and PCR testing when someone has symptoms or is a contact of a case) and encouraging subsequent isolation where required. The council continue to work with health partners on the delivery of the vaccination programme across the Borough and are promoting the use of preventative measures such as ventilation and face coverings where appropriate.

The coming weeks will see many occasions and celebrations bringing people together in the run up to Christmas. We must remain cautious and continue to employ all measures we can to make these occasions as safe as possible and keep our rates as low as we can as we head into Winter.

Vaccination is the most important action to promote. Encourage anyone and everyone who is eligible to have all the vaccinations.

After another such disruptive year I would like to wish everybody a merry Christmas and a less eventful but Happy New Year for 2022.

John Kaiser
Councillor for Barkham,
Wokingham Borough Council
Tel : 07714192352
Email John.kaiser@wokingham.gov.uk

Barkham web site

I hope you like our website www.barkham.org.uk

We are constantly looking for ways to improve it and would welcome your suggestions.

More photos please!

We are always in need of attractive images of the Barkham area for both the web site and newsletter, so if you have some interesting photos and would like to share them please get in touch.

Dave Clements
webmaster@barkham.org.uk



Planning

Although it all seems very quiet on the planning front, there is much going on behind the scenes. We are still awaiting the revised Local Plan Update, we hear that the much-heralded national planning reforms are being revisited and the Secretary of State (SofS) for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has been considering whether the Barkham Solar Farm planning application should be 'called in'.

Many people have asked what it means for a planning application to be 'called in' so let's start with that.

The SofS has the power to relieve local planning authorities of the decision-making process for certain applications so that he can make the determination himself. The powers are very broad and may be invoked for several reasons including where the issues raised are of national significance or if there is potential conflict with national planning policies or locally adopted development plans. In practice, these powers are exercised selectively and applied to relatively few applications.

On Wed 08 Sep 2021, the Barkham Solar Farm - Application Number 211081 - was discussed by the Wokingham Borough Council Planning Committee. The session

began by reviewing a proposed amendment to make the economics of the proposed project more transparent and to ensure that the Planning Committee continued to have an input into its overall progress. This was voted down.

The main business of the meeting was to decide whether to approve the application. Several members of the committee asked challenging questions about the proposal, especially if it would bear further scrutiny should the application be 'called in'. The questions largely focussed on the use of BMV (Best and Most Versatile) farmland and the impact on the Heritage Assets around and including the Church. The council officers justified these points because of the Climate Emergency before us and the installation for 25 years being regarded as temporary. The application was approved although the Decision Notice (DN) cannot be issued until the question of the 'call in' is resolved.

If the application were to be 'called in', a public enquiry would be held by a senior planning inspector who would make recommendations to the SofS who would, in turn, determine the case. If not, then the DN would be issued and the project progressed as planned. We have just heard that the SofS has decided NOT to call in the application although, at the time of writing, the DN has not yet been issued.

Moving on to a second topic - a recent planning appeal has again highlighted The Coombes. The Coombes are privately owned and a few years ago, one owner of a relatively small area of the Coombes sold his holding as several independent plots. It must be stressed that this appeal applies to one of these auctioned

lots and NOT to the main area of The Coombes.

There are two broad schools of thought as to how woodland such as this could be managed:

- Let nature takes its course, allow rotting vegetation to create new habitats and the flora to re-generate naturally.
- Controlled regeneration by coppicing, elimination of invasive species, removing decaying plants and replanting.

Option 1 tends to favour preserving the overall biodiversity of the area whereas Option 2 focuses more on managing the tree stock.

In 2019 a number of applications were submitted for Works to Protected Trees (PA: 192911, 36-40 and 45) and these tended to fall more within the description of Option 2. These were rejected by WBC Planning and were taken to Appeal (APP/TPO/X0360/8158-8163). The appeals were mostly upheld - in other words supporting management of this localised auctioned area via Option 2.

So, what does it mean going forward? There is another application - PA 213040 - for further similar work on the same auctioned site and the results of the above appeals have been cited as a precedent to justify this work.

As for the main area of The Coombes, the biodiversity is being allowed to generate more naturally and it is important that the general public - the users - are wary not to trample the green shoots of recovery if they stray away from the existing trails.

If you have comments about anything written here then please e-mail to clerk@barkham-parish-council.org.uk.

Barkham Village Hall Charity



Barkham Village Hall is a Charity and a facility for use by the local community. It has two rooms, one large and one small, plus a well-equipped kitchen, and outside a patio and large grassed area, and large Car Park, for the use of the Hall users, so is suitable for wide variety of groups, meetings and functions.

The Village Hall is well utilised and regular users are:

Art Club – Band Practice - Bonsai club – Brownies - Church Youth Club & Sunday School – Dog Training - Karate - Ladies Group - Pilates - Pre-School - Rainbows - U3A Group – Walking Group. In addition, it is available for private functions such as Children’s Parties and Weddings.

The Quiz

The theme this time is “AKA” – Also Known As. I have used this theme before, but it was in 2013 so it’s time for a revamp (with different questions)!

1. One of the greatest ever footballers is Edson Arantes do Nascimento but by which (shorter) name does the world know him?
2. The teacher Gordon Sumner adopted which (perhaps snappier) name prior to becoming a rock star?
3. Staying with rock stars and one of the most successful bands in the world, how are Paul Hewson and David Evans better known?
4. Ellis Bell was a pseudonym used by the author of Wuthering Heights when it was first published. Who was she?
5. The crime novelist Robert Galbraith is a pseudonym used by which author very famous for another series of books?
6. William H Bonney was the real name of which famous American outlaw?
7. What was the pirate Blackbeard’s less threatening real name?
8. What is Bruce Banner’s green alter ego?
9. What was the Leslie Charteris character Simon Templar’s “holy” nickname?
10. What is the fitness instructor Derrick Evans MBE better known as?

Answers on page 23

Volunteers Needed

We need **Help** from community minded Volunteers to join the Village Hall Management Committee who hold bi-monthly meetings.

Areas where Help Is needed

- Practical help with maintenance of the Hall, e.g., painting and other small projects.
- Management of one-off major projects e.g., Replacing Hall windows, new Patio area etc.
- Occasional emergency cleaning and tidying of Hall, Field area and Car Park (We

have professional cleaners twice a week, but some users are not as tidy as they should be).

- Care of the Kitchen and equipment, Stove, Fridge, Pans, Crockery, Cutlery etc.

Please note that without more volunteers to help with the running of the Village Hall, it will not be there for you to use for your children’s parties and social gatherings etc. It is a great asset to the village, to be used and enjoyed by all. We want to keep it so, with a small contribution of your time we can all benefit

Please respond to:
Derek Oxbrough, Vice Chairman
doxbrough@hotmail.com
Tel: 01189760578



Be bright and protect your home from burglars this winter and holiday season

As the winter nights close in, leave a light on... and burglars in the dark! Burglars are often opportunistic thieves and you can take steps to avoid becoming one of their victims this winter.

- Try to make your home look occupied by using timer switches on lights and radios.
- Illuminate your front door with dusk to dawn lighting that comes on automatically.
- Consider purchasing and installing a video doorbell, house alarm or CCTV system.
- Close and double lock all doors and windows when going out, even if you’re only away from home for a short period of time. Those 10 or 15 minutes on the school run are all a burglar needs to break into your home.
- Always double lock doors and windows when you go to bed.
- Keep all valuables and keys out of sight and away from doors, windows and letterboxes.
- When not in use, store electronic car key fobs in a security pouch to prevent them from being scanned by thieves to open and steal your car.
- If you have a key safe, ensure it is not visible to people passing by, but anyone tampering with it can be seen.
- When working from home, ensure laptops and electronic equipment are not on view.

Don’t give thieves the tools to burgle your house, ensure sheds and garages are locked and secure.

Don’t leave any presents on view or advertise them on social media.

Don’t leave packaging next to your bin.

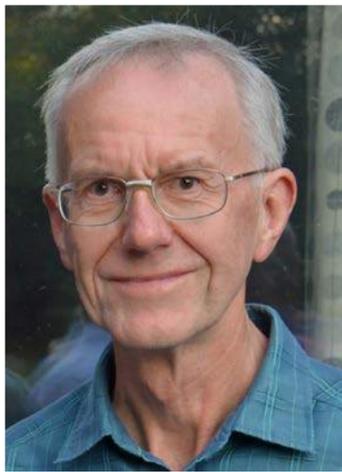
Register your new presents and gifts online at www.immobilise.com

Don’t advertise you are away from home on social media. Ask a trusted friend or neighbour to keep an eye on your property.

Receive free crime and information updates from Thames Valley Police by registering for Thames Valley Alert at: www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk Consider joining a local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. For more information, visit www.ourwatch.org.uk . You can find further crime prevention advice at www.thamesvalley.police.uk

Please contact us if you have any information relating to burglary in your neighbourhood. Report online at www.thamesvalley.police.uk or call us on 101. Always dial 999 in an emergency. Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on free phone 0800 555 111.

Email: You can contact your local neighbourhood team via WokinghamNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk – please note this email address cannot be used to report crimes or for any urgent matters.
Follow us on social media for regular crime updates and find out what your local policing teams are up to: **Facebook:** TVP Bracknell & Wokingham **Twitter:** @TVP_Wokingham



Alan's Patch

will look more interesting in a year's time.

In my vegetable patch I have harvested the potatoes and stored them in my old chest freezer in the shed. All the roots - potatoes, carrots, parsnips and Jerusalem artichokes - have been successful. Peas were good, despite the pigeon attacks, and the various beans. French and runner were fine, if late to start cropping, and I have gathered a good crop of Cannellini and Borlotti beans for



stews and casseroles during the winter months. Shallots, mostly sown from seed, produced only a moderate crop but the leeks have grown really well and will see me through to Spring.

Butternut squash are a little smaller than previous years and a few have yet to ripen fully as a result of less sun during late Summer / Autumn, so I have put these in a sunny window to try and ripen them. Courgettes didn't seem to be affected though and were prolific, both green and yellow. I prefer the yellow ones because they are a little sweeter and they

Each year the weather is a bit different and this year has certainly left its mark on my fruit and vegetable crops. A long and cold Spring was followed by a wet summer with fewer sunny days than in recent years. The Autumn has been mild so far and I have started a new project. I have been building a bed of ornamental grasses. I love grasses and how



they move even in the slightest breeze, especially beautiful in sunlight. So, I've been planting some 90 grasses in a new area. During this project I have been learning about Stipa, Miscanthus, Panicum and Molinia! Not much to see just now but hopefully they

are easier to spot against the green foliage whereas the green ones hide and I spot some only when they have grown to the size of marrows!

There was a small crop of sweet corn, again affected by the season. I know some people have had great crops and others, like me, are disappointed with theirs.

I'm not a huge fan of brassicas but this year I have grown more cabbage and kale. I netted them

to keep off the butterflies which prevented damage from caterpillars however because they were netted, the slugs were free to roam safe from me and the birds! I will net them differently next year with easier access and try to spot the slugs earlier!

As usual I've been enjoying salads until very recently but my experiment with celery was doomed because, although they grew beautifully, they turned out to be tough and chewy! A bit to learn on this. Herbs have been successful with basil, mint, oregano and chives plus Simon

and Garfunkel would have enjoyed the 'parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme'!

In the greenhouse the tomatoes were pretty good but again affected by the season, so they started cropping later and there are more green ones at the end of the season which I will be converting into chutney. On the other hand, cucumbers and, surprisingly, the chillies were prolific.

Of the fruit, the apples were a disappointment, for the first time in many years - a lot of small ones and too many damaged by pests to store for long. My new pears have produced a modest but encouraging crop. The new strawberries were a great success as were the gooseberries (despite the sawfly damaging the leaves) and black currants. The fan-trained nectarine bore its first small crop so that was exciting. They weren't as sweet as I had hoped for but perhaps this is another crop affected by the relatively low amount of sun this year. The weather was ideal for rhubarb which grew extremely well. I have plenty in the freezer.

Among the winter jobs is cleaning the greenhouse, so last week I cleared it out completely and got the job done - one of my least favourite jobs of the year! My new pressure washer made it easier and less drudgery! It's important to clean the glass inside and out to get maximum of transmission of light for the plants. Next up is to fumigate the greenhouse to clear out any bugs that might overwinter inside.

No shortage of compost this year with it being so wet and the plants growing so well! It's been warm most of October and November so far and most of the leaves have

yet to drop, so that's a job to come shortly.

Now here is an interesting plant grown from seed. I'd be surprised if you recognise it, for it's an avocado! I like avocados and



I've often wonder if the seed from those bought in the shops will grow, so now I know. I've brought it inside for the winter as it is not hardy and we'll see what happens next.....

The deer visit the field behind and are often seen grazing in the early morning and if it's sunny lying down in the field, ever watchful.

Although this has been a wet summer, the trend is towards hotter and drier ones. With that in mind I have attached some drainage pipes to my greenhouse and collect the rainwater in a tank which I plan to use to irrigate the plants inside the greenhouse next season.





Social Matters

Autumn is well and truly upon us now with dark evenings and even a few foggy, chilly mornings, but our spirits are not dampened as, although the pesky Covid virus is still making its presence all around us, we are still, thankfully, able to carry on with our planned social events, at the moment.

There has been one event since the last Newsletter - the Skittles Evening on October 2nd. Over 50 people attended what was a great fun evening of competitive games of skittles. After 2 rounds of team games we paused for a tasty Ploughman's Supper, and then nearly everyone entered the 'Killer Game' - the knock out game to produce the last person standing. As players were knocked out they were treated to choc ices as a consolation! This year the winning team was 'The Happy Campers', and the winner of the Killer Game was Jacqui Warner, who was actually also a member of the winning Happy Campers team - so a great team result! She was very pleased with her prize winnings. Many thanks go to Cathy and Nick for being MC and doing the computer scoring. To comply with Covid guidelines there was plenty of ventilation in the Hall and sanitisers were available.

By the time you receive this Winter Newsletter the Annual Quiz evening will have taken place on November 27th, so a report on this will appear in the next Spring edition.

The last event planned for this year is the 'Family Carols in the Park' on Friday December 17th at the Junipers Park. Carollers meet at 7pm at the junction of the Woodlands and the Junipers to commence singing, accompanied by the Breakaway Brass Band. This is a free event and carol sheets will be provided. After much singing and arrival at the entrance to the park mulled wine, soft drinks and mince pies will be available. A bucket collection will be made for the Band as they very kindly give their free time to play for us. So do come along, wrap up warm and bring the children and grandchildren to enjoy this lovely start to the Festive Season. Look out for posters around the Village to remind you of the date.

Future events are planned for 2022, and the hope is that Covid doesn't get in the way. A Barn Dance is planned for Saturday March 19th from 7.00 till 10.00pm. There will be a 'live band with a caller', a supper provided and a licensed bar. Tickets will be available nearer the time from Gill Powell, preferably by email - social@barkham.org.uk or telephone on 01189783373. Again, look out for posters in the new year displayed around the village for details.

The Annual Children's Easter Egg Hunt is planned to take place at the Junipers Park on Easter Sunday, April 22nd at 3pm. Further details will appear in the Spring Newsletter.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at our events and enjoying some great fun. But now I would like to wish you all and your families a Very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Shirley Warner
Social Committee Member



Barkham Hookers

As you might know the Barkham Hookers crochet group have raised over £50,000 for the British Legion through the sale of our crocheted poppies over the last 8 years.

This year we were invited to share the Pop-up Poppy Appeal Shop in the old Clinton Cards shop premises in Peach Street with the volunteers from the Wokingham Poppy Appeal led by David Dunham.

We displayed our large pixelated poppy blanket as well as a giant 100 that I made from the inner hoops of a broken pop up tent !

We sold hundreds of crocheted poppies including purple ones for pets, headbands and bobbles, posh poppies with vintage buttons and bespoke poppies with original military buttons from many different regiments and armed forces as well as from the Emergency services. We have loved being able to talk to a wide range of people and have heard stories of relatives caught in wars who are now being remembered with a special poppy.

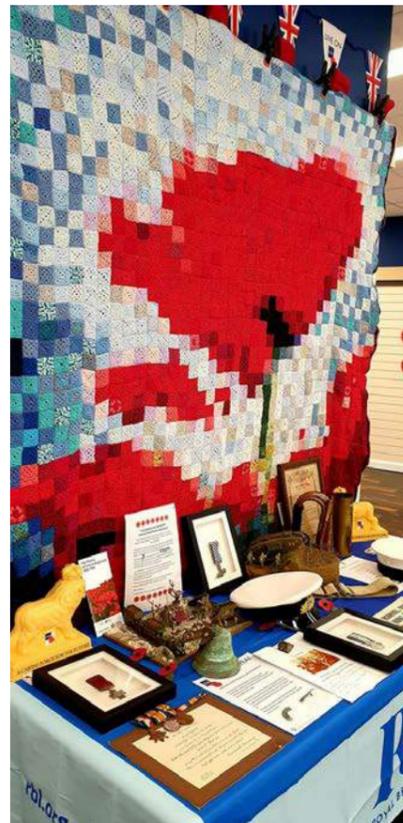
We yarn bombed the town centre with poppy bunting and have even covered some local post boxes with poppy hats. We hope to raise a few thousand pounds this year, all of which will be donated to the Royal British Legion. As we do supply most of the yarn, buttons and pins ourselves we would always be grateful for any donations of these items...especially vintage or military buttons.

If you would like to join us, we are a friendly group of like-minded, yarn-addicted hookers of the



woolly persuasion who enjoy getting together with our hooks over a cuppa. Sessions in term-time: Wednesdays and Thursdays 10 -12 at Henry Street Garden Centre, Thursdays 1-3pm at FBC Finchampstead, Fridays 10 -12 Sanpa Restaurant, Wokingham

Gaynor White



Dinton Activity Centre - now open



Dinton Pastures' new £2.4 million activity centre opened to the public in September and has already been enjoyed by many visitors.

Designed by HLM Architects, the Dinton activity centre is Wokingham Borough's first net zero carbon building, featuring a range of energy-efficient technologies, including solar panels and windcatchers on the roof for natural ventilation, low energy LED lighting and air source heat pumps, all of which will significantly reduce the centre's overall energy demands and maintenance overheads.

The new activity hall houses a fun climbing wall that has been hand painted to bring the outdoors indoors. The woodland and water scenes depict the flora and fauna found around the country park and will be the perfect hybrid of physical and environmental education. The wall will be pay and play session for family groups and can be pre booked for school and youth groups in term time. The modern locking system used on the climbing lines ensures climbers are always safe.

Plan your visit and review the available activities on their website. www.dinton-pastures.co.uk

New destination play area coming to Cantley Park

Work began in October on Wokingham Borough's next destination play area. We have started the first phase of construction on the brand new and inclusive destination play area at Cantley Park in Wokingham.

The brand-new play area, funded by developers' contributions from new housing, will replace the existing equipment which is located close to the tennis courts and will complement the existing sport and leisure facilities at Cantley Park. The play area has been designed to encourage all children and families to play together in carefully laid out inclusive play zones.

The project has begun with the installation of the power supply for the new Yalp interactive equipment. The interactive features are designed to make playing outside as addictive as gaming, but without the screen time, with equipment such as an interactive DJ booth, dance arch and games wall.

We will be providing regular updates via this newsletter so keep your eyes peeled for more exciting news.

The play area is due to be completed by Jupiter Play towards the end of the year. However, the newly opened café (replacing the old changing rooms), refurbished pavilion, 3G sports pitch with floodlights and greenway route through the park are all now open to the public.



Good news for the group still continues, and although the virus is still with us, we have been able to continue with our monthly meetings at the Village Hall. We do have some different conditions to comply with - lots of ventilation and sanitising, and keeping appropriate distancing where possible. Speaker evenings resumed in September where the speakers presented some interesting topics including 'Tales of a Midwife', and 'Geographic Profiling (this particular presentation was amazing and described how profiling enables detectives to identify murder suspects using special scientific and location techniques). Our November speaker was a lovely lady who gave a very moving talk and presentation on the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital,

or GOSH, as it is affectionately known.

At our November meeting we also had the pleasure of presenting our Founder Member, and Honorary President, Pat, with flowers, chocolates and a signed card as she was celebrating her 90th Birthday a few days after our meeting. She was very surprised but delighted, and we all said what a wonderful achievement it was for a remarkable lady. Our programme of walk through-out Spring, Summer and Autumn has now been suspended for the Winter, but hopefully it will resume in Spring '22.

On December 1st we will be having our Christmas Party evening when our Ladies all bring something delicious to tuck into - the table is always laden with a wonderful array of both savoury and sweet things - they never fail to provide a feast! Mulled wine and a 'secret Santa' add to the fun, and this gets the Festive Season started. We continue in January with a speaker meeting, and in February we have our AGM, and

a Silent Auction (to raise a few funds for the Club).

Then from March onwards it's the new year with another full diary or speakers, events and special evenings to delight us again. Our Programme Secretary, Jenny, always manages to produce a wonderful, varied and interesting programme, and during the year there is usually a topic suitable for us to invite our menfolk along to. I do hope that, as Winter continues and we go into 2022, the Covid situation doesn't worsen to upset our plans - we are so enjoying doing 'near normal' things again and we remain positive.

If you are new to the area, or before now haven't thought about joining the Ladies Group and now wish to, then please contact Shirley on 0118 9789124 or email me on shirleyannwarner@gmail.com for more information. We meet at the Village Hall on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm, when we have a social time and do a variety of things.

Shirley Warner
Chairperson

The Link Visiting Scheme is a charity based in Wokingham Borough who support older people who would benefit from more company or who would like some help to join group activities or friendship groups. We currently support just under 500 people each year with over 400 wonderful volunteers who donate their time to those struggling with the serious impact of loneliness.

Christmas 2021

We understand that Christmas can be an especially difficult time if you are not near close family or friends. It's a time where loss and grief are more keenly felt and instead of being a time of celebration and excitement it can feel much more ordinary. We at Link Visiting do all we can to ensure anyone who is on their own on Christmas Day has a friend to talk to, a delicious hot meal brought to their door on the day and a bag of treats and goodies too. If you are on your own, please get in touch with us and we can see if we can help. We rely on donations to support those in our community who need us most. Could you help?

For more information visit our website www.linkvisiting.org/christmas or call our office 0118 9798019

Marjie Walker – CEO
marjie@linkvisiting.org

Where in Barkham?

Where can you find these two?

Answer on page 23

the Link
visiting scheme

Do you know someone spending Christmas Day alone?

We are now accepting referrals for our Christmas Day event, bringing joy and companionship to those who would otherwise be spending Christmas on their own

At The Link Visiting Scheme, we understand how difficult and painful the Christmas period can be for those on their own. So, for the 10th year running, we're planning to bring festive cheer to the loneliest, most isolated older people in our area. This will include providing telephone support, as well as a delicious, traditional hot Christmas dinner and a bag of treats and gifts hand-delivered by friendly volunteers.

Visit linkvisiting.org/christmas to make a referral, or contact our office if you have any questions: 0118 9798019

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A Day in the Life of a Volunteer Trustee for Crossroads Care Wokingham

It is a fact that we are living longer and many of us want to remain independent in our own homes. In a lot of cases this works well with partners supporting each other. The sad fact is that one of us will become more dependent on the other which will require one partner to become a carer.

Crossroads has been providing essential support for carers who are caring for someone with dementia or a life limiting illness since 1994. Crossroads is a network partner of the Carers Trust with Princess Anne as their patron. It's work is regulated by the Care Quality Commission and Crossroads Care Wokingham has been given consecutive overall Good ratings for the work it does.

Crossroads is a small charity based at Wokingham Hospital and has 11 Care Support Workers (CSWs) who support the carers, a small office team and a board of eight volunteer trustees.

The support Crossroads offers takes place when a carer needs to have time off to attend a doctor's or hospital appointment, perhaps to visit the hair-dresser or just to have a lunch with a friend. This small amount of time off allows the carer to relax from caring when Crossroads steps into their shoes and looks after their loved one.

Since joining the board, I have become the fundraising trustee and secretary. I have enjoyed organising quizzes, theatre events, raffles, stalls at Wokingham Carnival and Winnersh Fete but the most popular has been an annual breakfast which has been held for the past 5 years. I have not seen so many people enjoy so many

bacon rolls, danish pastries and copious cups of tea and coffee and they get up early for the pleasure. I haven't yet convinced them to come in their pyjamas. I have been blessed with companies such as Tesco, Citroemach, the Co-op and AVS Fencing Supplies helping to sponsor the breakfasts. Money raised goes towards the continued support of carers.

I suppose the best things about being a trustee is that I have a wonderful group of supporters who always come along to whatever event I organise. This year for instance we had the breakfast earlier than normal as I had hoped to get everyone sitting outside. Several supporters were not able to come but they all sent donations to support the charity. So even though I didn't have as many people sitting down to bacon butties we still raised a lovely sum of money for the charity.

2020 was a difficult year for carers as they still had to care for the member of their family and our Care Support Workers could not be with them at the beginning of the pandemic to help. A lot of carers have chosen not to have help because they want to make sure they are safe but slowly the CSWs have started to go back

into their homes. Throughout the pandemic the CSWs kept in touch with the carers which was very much appreciated.

The numbers of carers in the Borough of Wokingham will continue to rise and the support they will require won't go away. In fact, it will increase, so small charities such as Crossroads will continue to be needed. CSWs need to be trained and have relevant qualifications in order to do their jobs. They do this job because they want to make the lives of carers easier but there is, throughout the UK, a huge shortage of carers. It is a very rewarding job, but it takes a certain type of person to carry out this role. Perhaps you enjoy being with your grandparents or even great grandparents; they can certainly get a lot of stimulus from the younger generation who have a lot to offer, so if you want to care for people then perhaps Crossroads might be the right job for you.

If you have recently retired and feel you might like to volunteer as a trustee then please let me know. Marketing skills is one area which would benefit the organisation.

As for me I never knew Crossroads existed until the Chairman

of the Council nominated it as her Charity and since 1998 it's been part of my life. It is a privilege to be part of this organisation, from organising fund raising events, to receiving support from individuals who raise money because a family member has been struck down by Alzheimer's.

I think there are three things which stand out for me, the first was a letter I received from Nancy Reagan in reply to a letter I had sent her telling her about the Chairman's charity. In the late 90's Ronald Reagan was the only person whose Alzheimer's diagnosis had been publicised. She kindly replied supporting the money raising initiatives and hoping we would be able to help lots of people. Secondly, meeting Iris Murdoch's husband. Iris had been invited to attend the conference but had sadly died three weeks before the event. Thirdly, being the secretary of the Alzheimer's Carers Trust which taught everyone in the group so many things about Alzheimer's and how we could help carers whose loved ones had been diagnosed with this life limiting disease. Helping them to get help was very gratifying.

The trustees meet every two months. So, if you would like to learn more please contact me.

Call me on 07709 946 824

Email us on contact@wokinghamcrossroads.org

Or visit the Crossroads website on <https://www.wokinghamcrossroads.org>



An ordinary Christmas? No such thing!

After last year, can't you feel yourself longing for an 'ordinary' Christmas? A year ago, any plans we had to celebrate Christmas by visiting family, eating out with friends or going to a movie or pantomime – were all cancelled. How we would love to finish 2021 with an ordinary Christmas!

Yet when we consider the events behind Christmas, they are anything but ordinary. At the climax of a classic carol service, the reading from John's gospel includes these stunning words 'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us'. This is the extraordinary and wonderful, good news at the heart of Christmas – the claim that the God who made everything, stepped into history by becoming a human being. He became like one of us, so that we might truly know him and so that he can bring hope into our broken world and broken lives.

Perhaps, after the last 18 months, we are more aware of our frailty and our limitations than ever. Why not join us this Christmas to hear afresh the announcement of 'good news of great joy, that will be for all the people.'

We would love to invite you to celebrate Christmas with us at Barkham church. We are planning to run our normal services:

Sunday 19th @ 7pm
Carols by Candlelight

Friday 24th @ 4pm
Family Carols
(Ideal for younger children)

Friday 24th @ 11:30pm
Midnight Carols

Saturday 25th @ 10am
Christmas Day Service
for all ages

If there is one lesson we have learned over the last 18 months, it is that all plans are provisional. Last Christmas we weren't allowed to sing indoors, so instead we enjoyed having our carols services on the field at the Village Hall. So, keep an eye on the Barkham page of our website www.abch.org.uk or look out for the cards which we will deliver around the parish when plans are in place. However we celebrate Christmas this year, you are warmly invited to join us.

Julian Bidgood
Minister of Barkham

A Time to Remember – 3pm Sunday 5th December @ Arborfield Church.

Christmas can be an especially difficult time for those who have lost loved ones, and for many, the last year has led to many more of us facing bereavement. 'A Time to Remember' is a service that Arborfield and Barkham churches have run for many years. It provides the opportunity to remember those we have lost, as well as the chance to hear words of comfort from the scriptures. If you or anyone you know would value a service like this, all are very welcome to come to this year's service, happening at Arborfield Church.



Finchampstead Flower Club (FFC)



FFC met online using Zoom for over a year but the autumn demonstrations have been "live".

The members have enjoyed watching arrangements develop in front of their eyes and sometimes winning them through a raffle.



In October Stephanie Cornells produced six arrangements on the title of "Contained Delights". She used a variety of interesting containers including pots, vases, pumpkins and squashes. Flowers ranged from roses and chrysanthemums to clematis and a 'tropical bunch'. Members then took home both the arrangements and bunches of flowers that hadn't been used.

We meet on the fourth Monday of each month in California Hall at 8pm. Please phone the chair, Lis Barrett, 01189892092 if you would like to attend. Your first visit is free. If you would like to follow our activities you can find us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Finchampstead-Flower-Club-2011434195620803/>

Kriss Turner



Why you don't have to be great at singing for singing to be great for you!



Do you love a good old singalong? When you sing in the kitchen or car, who is it for? Is it a performance because you're a great singer? No – it's for your SELF – it's uplifting and freeing. There's nobody judging you and it lets off a whole bag of steam!

Singing on our own is great, but there is a wealth of research showing that singing in groups brings myriad physical and mental health benefits: from improving heart rate, blood pressure, immune system, pain & stress management, breathing & lung health, depression & anxiety, to aiding sleep, boosting our general mood and increasing our sense of connection and belonging. And the best part is that being a 'good singer' is not a prerequisite for being able to reap these benefits!

Having been a singer in various choirs and a band since my early teens, the benefits of singing have long been my friend, but a few years ago I started to form the idea of community singing groups for fun and wellbeing, rather than

Wokingham Choral Society
70th anniversary season

Family Christmas Carol Concert
"Around the World with Christmas"

Conductor James Morely Potter
Organist John Evanson

11th December 2021 6.30pm
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under 5s FREE

available from choir members
or via email:
tickets@wokingham-choral-society.org.uk

www.wokingham-choral-society.org.uk

registered charity 274853

for performance or perfection. In conversations others had said to me that they would love to join a choir but... for various reasons they felt they couldn't or shouldn't. Some would say they think they can't sing, they can't read music or they don't like performing. Others that they can't make a weekly time commitment or that they worried their health issues may get in the way, etc. The reasons people would list off all made me feel that I could do something to plug that gap for them. Knowing from my own experiences the huge benefits singing can bring, I wanted to share that with others, so I set up Sing for your Self - an inclusive group setting where people could come to sing popular songs, without pressure, judgement or expectation, no matter what they thought of their own singing ability.



With enthusiasm and a warm welcome, my aim at "Sing for your Self" is always to create an atmosphere of inclusion, trust and friendship where everyone can relax, sing confidently and leave the session feeling uplifted and happy! After a warm-up, where we leave behind the stresses of the outside world and our daily lives, we sing along to well-known songs from across the decades, from '60s right through to modern day. We learn one song more thoroughly each week, pausing

to go through any tricky bits, and then we just enjoy singing them out! Our sessions bring together men and women, young and old and provide some great laughs.

Since returning to our sessions in September, after the hiatus caused by the pandemic, we have not resumed our refreshment breaks in the afternoons yet, but we hope to be able to get that back very soon, bringing some much-missed social contact into the day as well.

For further information on local sessions go to www.singforyourself.co.uk

or www.facebook.com/sing.foryourself.group

or email at soph@singforyourself.co.uk

Soph Tartelin
– Sing for your Self

Is kindness good for you?

'Tis the season to be jolly, tra la la la laa, la laa, lol laa. Though, let's face it, being told to be jolly often doesn't work quite as well as we wish it might. The ironic nature of the mind, and perhaps a bit of a push from British culture, may trigger a list of reasons why jolliness is the last thing on our minds. But I don't want to humbug the reasons to be cheerful, so I let's examine a path that might be worth following.

There was a classic experiment run from the Universities of British Columbia and Harvard where people were given either \$5 or \$20 and told to spend the money by 5pm, in one group, on themselves and in another group, on someone else. Their happiness levels were measured at the end of the day, with those spending the money on someone else reporting the highest happiness levels, with both \$5 and \$20 having equal effect.

Who benefits from kindness? I hope those receiving it benefit. Otherwise, we might be compelled to use a different word. But is that where it stops?

Clearly, spending money on someone is not the only way, or even the best way, of being kind,

though it does have a certain ring to it at this time of year. More broadly, and you'll have your own experience of this, well-received kindness, benefits not only those on the receiving end but also those giving it. So, how might we enhance the benefits of kindness on both sides? Advice, incidentally, that is as much for me as anyone else. Firstly, on the receiving end, accept kindness with grace. Rather than saying 'you shouldn't have' or worse, 'I must pay you for your time,' recognise the receipt with thanks and allow yourself to feel grateful rather than indebted.

On the giving side, be graceful in receiving thanks, 'it was nothing' probably isn't true, 'you are welcome' is perhaps more graceful. And, for those who are more comfortable being on the giving than the receiving end (you know who you are), first take the above suggestions for receivers into account. And secondly, remember what it feels like to be kind, and allow someone else that gift. After all, we don't want to turn kindness into a chore, or worse, an affliction, by making it all one way.

But what about the obligation that receiving kindness can sometimes generate? Perhaps pay-it-forward is helpful here. You helped me, and I've helped them, and perhaps, in turn, they will help someone else. Perfect. So, yes, kindness is good for you. And this Christmas, may you have the opportunity to both give and receive.

Mark Quirk
www.MindfulnessBerkshire.co.uk

Barkham Diary

01/12/21	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
08/12/21	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
14/12/21	Barkham Parish Council	AGCC	7.30pm
14/12/21	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
17/12/21	BVRA Carols in the Park	Junipers	7.00pm
05/01/22	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
11/01/22	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
11/01/22	Barkham Parish Council	AGCC	7.30pm
12/01/22	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
24/01/22	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
02/02/22	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
08/02/22	Barkham Parish Council	AGCC	7.30pm
08/02/22	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
09/02/22	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
11/02/22	Copy deadline for Spring Newsletter		
28/02/22	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
02/03/22	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
08/03/22	Barkham Parish Council	AGCC	7.30pm
08/03/22	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
09/03/22	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
19/03/22	Barn Dance	BVH	7.00pm
28/03/22	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm

Weekly Events

Mondays	Pilates Class	BVH	11.30am
Mondays	Dog Training	BVH	6.30pm
Tues-Fri	Barkham Pre-School	BVH	9.00am
Tuesdays	Sing For Your Self	AVH	1.00pm
Thursdays	Pilates Class	BVH	6.15pm

BVH is Barkham Village Hall
CRH is California Ratepayers Hall
AVH is Arborfield Village Hall
FMH is Finchampstead Memorial Hall
AGCC is Arborfield Green Community Centre

1. *Pele*
2. *Sting*
3. *Bono and The Edge*
4. *Emily Bronte*
5. *Jk Rowling*
6. *Billy the Kid*
7. *Edward Teach*
8. *The (Incredible) Hulk*
9. *The Saint*
10. *Mr Motivator*

The Quiz - answers

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Friday 14th January Crazy Diamond - Pink Floyd tribute act Royal British Legion

Friday 21st January Toyah Whitty Theatre

Friday 28th January Richard Digance ESSC

Saturday 12th February South Coast Soul Revue Royal British Legion

Friday 18th February Harriet Whitty Theatre

Tickets are now on sale for all confirmed dates, a full list can be found on our website

www.wokinghammusicclub.co.uk To sign up for our newsletter just drop a line to

info@wokinghammusicclub.co.uk. Tickets for shows can be booked at

www.ticketsource.co.uk/wokinghammusicclub

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You can amend your mailing preferences or opt out any time by clicking on the link at the bottom of any of our emails or emailing webmaster@barkham.org.uk

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